

Thoughts on the Mercury Digitization Project Training Workshop

by Lenora Williams
Project Assistant

The Training Workshop of The Mercury Newspaper Digitization Project was held on 11th-12th July 2018 at the Department of Archives. The administrators of this project graciously extended an invitation to scholars, senior officials and new professionals in Research, Archival Science and Library Science to participate in the training workshop. This turned out to be of mutual benefit to the hosts and invited guests as the exchange of ideas over the course of the workshop inspired persons to recognize the wealth of historical information Barbados has, to think seriously about a digitization strategy and to exchange collective ideas and resources to the good of the historical record.

As a junior heritage professional, it was amazing to see the potential collaboration across the institutions. Seeing the invitation extended and accepted went a long way to refute the criticism many institutions often face about exclusion among them. This was further restated in the introductory session of the workshop when speakers told participants the grant was the efforts of persons from several institutions both from Barbados and abroad.

The workshop was a series of presentations and demonstrations which allowed persons to ask questions and gain first-hand experience with the equipment and allowed each person to engage with the information at their own pace. While many persons were familiar with scanners, many people were not familiar with digitizing with the DSLR camera, one of which was used in the workshop and will be used in the project. However, as one of three amateur photographers in the audience, we were excited to lean on the information we already had and also build on it in order to digitize in this way.

As the Project Assistant, I will be one of the main persons involved in the day to day digitizing. After the first week of digitizing after the workshop I can say all the demonstrations by Laura Perry and Jake Goodson of Digital Library of the Caribbean has prepared me to fulfill my role in the project. They were able to give me an understanding of each step in the process and the general objectives of each. I found it very helpful to be able to access professionals in the industry who have the experience working with several types of materials. Most importantly the hands-on training inspires me to approach my duties with a confidence that reading a manual may not be able to cover.

As I continue to learn more about the contents of this resource I am digitizing, conservation methods and the new software I am being exposed to I will always be grateful to those who provided this opportunity and those who made the workshop the success that it was.

July 26, 2018